Canadian Parks Service

PARKS CANADA VRM/SAR REVENUE FRAMEWORK GUIDELINES

PARKS CANADA

September 1995
Reprint:
September 1996

Parks Canada VRM/SAR: Revenue Framework Guidelines

Prepared by:

Search and Rescue Revenue Management Working Group

September 1995

Parks Canada
Department of Canadian Heritage

©Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1996.

Published under the authority of the Minister of the Department of Canadian Heritage
Ottawa, 1996.

Development and Co-ordination: SAR Revenue Management Working Group led by Jennie Sparkes, National Visitor Risk Management Specialist, Parks Canada
Project Management: Per Nilsen, Head, Appropriate Activities and Risk Management, Parks Canada
Editing: Sheila Ascroft
Design: Sheila Ascroft and Suzanne H. Rochette, Publications, Parks Canada
Desktop Production: Suzanne H. Rochette
Author of Appendix 7: Persuasive Communication Strategies: Dr. Ron McCarville, Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo

A limited number of copies of this paper are available. For more information contact: Per Nilsen, Head, Appropriate Activities and Risk Management, Parks Canada, 4th floor, 25 Eddy Street, Hull, Quebec, Canada, K1A 0M5 or phone (819) 994-2745; fax (819) 994-5140; email: per_nilsen@pch.gc.ca.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means without prior permission.

This report is printed on 50% recycled paper. It can also be recycled.

Report is available in French under the title: *Parcs Canada Gestion des risques courus par les visiteurs Lignes directrices du cadre de gestion des recettes.*

Table of Contents

Introduction 5
Purpose and Rationale 5
Context 5
Objective 6

Guiding Principles 7

Application of the Process 9
Regular Track Process 10
Fast Track Process 10
Define service and beneficiaries 10
Validation of service 10
Identify options 10
Development of communication strategies 11
Management review of potential options 11
Consultation with clients 11
Final direction resolution 12
Identify costs & funding options for chosen direction 12
Funding mechanism decisions 12
Prepare communication package 12

Appendices
1: PMC Record of Decision 13
2: ICSAR Cost Recovery Principles 14
3: Revenue and Cost Recovery Option Continuum 15
4: Program Elements within Each Service Category 17
5: Cost Calculation Spread Sheet 19
6: Examples of VRM Field Level of Service 21
7: Persuasive Communication Strategies 22

Introduction

Purpose and Rationale

To provide managers with guidelines to ensure that a consistent and equitable approach is used in determining revenue management strategies for Public Safety programs. The "Guidelines" are required as part of the ongoing implementation of Parks Canada's Business Plan and Revenue Management Strategy. It will enable Parks Canada managers to:

1) Continue to reduce dependency on appropriations;
2) Accomplish Program Management Committee (PMC) direction and approval to determine mechanisms for achieving 100 percent cost recovery for search and rescue response services (Appendix 1); and
3) Be consistent with Treasury Board guidelines on user fees and the Interdepartmental Committee on Search and Rescue (ICSAR) Cost Recovery Principles (Appendix 2).

Context

The "traditional" public safety program was developed and delivered by the National Park Warden Service (Ecosystem Management) and centred around the provision of a first-class Search and Rescue Service (SAR). The training for and delivery of this service was, and is, integrated into all of the subactivities programs and provides skills and expertise required by both the law enforcement and natural resource management functions. The service is a source of pride and accomplishment for the staff and continues to provide the Department with positive opportunities to demonstrate cost efficient and responsive programming.

The "traditional" public safety program underwent a review in the early '90s and the following changes were initiated:

- Development of a comprehensive visitor safety management framework to ensure compliance with program direction;
- Provision of a nationally consistent approach for assessing risk for public safety planning at field locations;
- Integration of the management of public safety planning into existing processes wherever possible;
- Research and documentation of recreational safety standards;
- Research and promotion of visitor self reliance;
- Development of a tiered training system;
- Revision of existing safety related directives/ bulletins.

These new initiatives amount to an overhaul in the way public safety services are planned, organized and delivered. The new approach which has received national and international attention, provides for a comprehensive more efficient, effective, and delivered Visitor Risk Management program (VRM). VRM was in the development and preliminary implementation stage as the Revenue Management/Cost Recovery Management program was being actioned. The two programs are complementary in most aspects with the exception of timing.

In the determination of appropriate levels of service and associated costs it is important to remember that Parks Canada is but one player in the overall federal public safety/search and rescue program. It is the collective federal community in concert with provincial, public and private sector interests that will ensure an appropriate level of safety

services to Canadians and other visitors. Both Canadian law and public expectations will also serve as drivers in the determination of scope and magnitude of public safety services. Like many federal programs, Parks Canada is confronted with a changing environment and a shrinking source of government resources. Aggressive and creative approaches must be sought to be provided in the future while finding alternative mechanisms for funding.

Objective

Given the need to integrate public safety program delivery with revenue/cost management, this document provides managers with guidelines. Adherence to a single set of principles and application of a common guidelines will ensure a nationally coherent and equitable approach to cost determination, cost containment and revenue strategies. Recognizing site and regionally specific differences in the service offer and revenue options available, these guidelines will be applied to all aspects of VRM delivery (see Appendix 3: VRM Revenue and Cost Recovery Options Continuum). The new integrated programs will ensure use of five basic precepts:

- Fairness
- Appropriateness
- Efficiency
- Simplicity
- Benefit

It should be clearly understood that these guidelines relate to a Revenue Management/Cost Recovery exercise directed towards reducing the reliance on appropriations as its primary means of funding and are not intended to act as a framework for a Visitor Risk Management program review. The Department of Canadian Heritage (DCH) has clear responsibilities to provide its clients due care and attention during their visit or should they unintentionally come in harm's way, how Parks Canada and its clients finance this program is the subject of these guidelines.

Guiding Principles

- Ensure ecological and commemorative integrity, service to clients and wise use of resources.
- Ensure an appropriate level of safety to the Canadian and visiting public while on lands/waters managed by the Department of Canadian Heritage (DCH).
- Service offer decisions will be guided by site and region specific needs and developed through an analysis based on the VRM principles.
- Strive to be cost effective in delivering specific service elements recognizing interdependency with other aspects of the overall program.
- The application of the revenue management framework should not result in park visitors being placed in jeopardy, or discourage the legitimate activation of the SAR system.
- Minimize overall program dependence on appropriations through establishment of an equitable revenue and cost recovery structure, directly related to the personal benefit derived (Appendix 3).
- Consult with client and stakeholders to foster a common understanding of the rationale for service and revenue decisions.
- Streamline delivery and diversify funding sources, while ensuring service excellence commensurate with the high profile, positive image, and importance of visitor safety services to the DCH national and international image.
- Ensure that commercial operations within National Parks and National Historic Sites are firmly established on a no-subsidy basis.

Note: See also Appendix 2: Interdepartmental Committee on Search and Rescue Guiding Principles for Cost Recovery.

Application of the Process

There are two methods available for the development of your revenue management/ cost recovery strategy. Determining which method is appropriate for your site, district or region will depend on where the site is in its application of the VRM process and how far it can proceed in light of the PMC timing. Regardless of the approach taken the public safety program must eventually be based on the full VRM process. If the site has initiated its VRM program to where service objectives have been set, then it is recommended that the site continue with that process ("regular track"). The "fast track" process is designed to allow the sites which have not initiated VRM programs to implement their cost recovery strategy to ensure compliance with the conditions laid out by PMC in its record of decision of April 1995 (Appendix 1). It is recognized that the majority of regions/ districts/sites will be using the "fast track" approach.

To better understand how these two methods relate to the VRM process the following chart has been developed:

Seven Steps of VRM	"Regular Track" Revenue/ Cost Recovery Considerations	"Fast Track" Revenue/Cost Recovery Considerations
1. Scoping	Define service, clients and stakeholders and validate present level of service against mandated responsibilities.	Not applicable.
2. Identify Hazards/Risk Issues	Define existing level of service, unresolved issues (real and potential), initiate client/public consultation if required.	Not applicable.
3. Organize Risk Issues	Priorize existing and unresolved issues.	Not applicable.
4. Set Service Objectives	Define program goals for up-coming years and consult clients/ public as required.	Not applicable.
5. Evaluate Existing Levels of Service (LOS)	Determine costs and funding options. Develop a communications and issue management strategy. Undertake a management review, and continue with clients/ public consultation as required.	Define existing level of service, clients and stakeholders. Develop service options. Develop a communications and issue management strategy. Undertake a management review, and initiate clients/public consultation on existing LOS as required.
6. Define Implementation Strategy	Establish and approve funding mechanism for level of service. Develop implementation and evaluation strategies for levels of service. Define responsibilities and partnerships. Develop schedules for implementation of new priorities.	Develop cost and funding options. Establish and approve funding mechanism. Prepare communication package.
7. Implement/Monitor	Implement and evaluate.	Action program.

Regular Track Process

It is recommended that this process be applied through the use of an inter-disciplinary team at the site level in conjunction with the comprehensive VRM process. Consultation with the Regional Public Safety Co-ordinator and regional revenue management team should occur in order to ensure regional consistency in the development of levels of service and revenue strategies.

Fast Track Process

It is recommended that this process be applied through the use of an interdisciplinary team approach at a regional scale to ensure consistency of approach and should involving site and domain specialists as well as client/interest group representatives. The following steps should be undertaken:

Define service and beneficiaries

List what safety services are being provided. Categorize these services into the "service categories" and their accompanying "program elements" as outlined in the VRM Revenue and Cost Recovery Continuum (Appendix 3) and listing of program elements (Appendix 4). Also identify who are the beneficiaries of this service, e.g. visitors, government agencies, business, etc. All services within the "service categories" should be costed out, regardless of their future funding source (appropriations or other means). However, for this exercise your primary interest will be the SAR "readiness" and "response" costs, as these will no longer be funded through "taxed-based funding" (appropriations). In defining your service the following questions may be of assistance.

- What is the service/product?
- How does the service/product contribute to key park/site, DCH or broad federal goals and objectives?
- What is the level of the offer? Given the exigent nature of such safety services options as to levels of service must include and impact analysis related to deviation from any established or perceived norms.
- Who is the client or beneficiary?

Product requirements: A list of current services elements, including primary beneficiaries, which have been costed. It is recommended that the spread sheet form (Appendix 5) be used to breakout costs organized by program elements and service categories.

Validation of service

At this stage you should be asking, "who is mandated to provide this service"? A review of the mandate, directives, legislation and activity standards will be required. Consideration and rationalization of historical demand for a service is also important at this stage.

Product requirements: It should take the form of an addition to the previous listing of costed services highlighting who has authority to manage that service.

Identify options (levels of service, delivery & estimated cost)

This stage requires the development of a range of acceptable options for the continued delivery of a service which considers the following points:

- The delivery of "Levels of Service" will be guided by specific site, district or region needs, and developed through an analysis based on the VRM principles.
- Where the responsibility for the delivery of a particular service is elsewhere, or shared, co-operative opportunities or

disengagement opportunities should be explored.

- This step must be carried out for each applicable service noted in the list of example services in Appendix 4.
- Examination of options for alternative delivery should include identification of strategies that could with certain efforts or adjustments become viable in the future.
- Similarly the options considered or selected should be sustainable over time.
- There may even be areas where the mandate is relatively clear yet perceived. Where these exist, co-operative opportunities or opportunities for disengagement will be explored.
- Where the level of service requirement is low, economies will be sought (e.g. non-personal communication, voluntary auxiliary, others within the organization, etc.).
- Where others provide a higher quality service offer, examine alternative delivery opportunities.
- Where commercial advantage opportunities are available (e.g. advertising on low frequency radio, etc.), sponsorship/ partnership will be sought.
- Options should be costed out on a macro basis.
- Seek entrepreneurial and philanthropic funding opportunities. Where appropriate costs will be passed on to user.

Product requirements: A list of costed options (at least 2) including levels of service and options for service delivery.

Development of communications strategies

The need to develop a comprehensive communication strategy for consultation with specific clients groups should be undertaken at this stage. Input by clients will be essential in identifying the viable options for management to consider.

Product requirements: For each major client group, a communication and issue management strategy should be developed. Also add perceived demands, the present mode of delivery, alternative delivery mechanisms and consultation needs to the already developed "List of Services" noted above.

Management review of potential options

During the "Fast Track" process, there will be three levels of review for the proposed public safety revenue/cost recovery options - preliminary, district/regional, and Parks Canada Investments (PCI).

The preliminary review will take place at the district and regional level. This review should be conceptual and include communications/consultation proposals. After the preliminary review, the "design team" should fine tune the proposal for PCI review.

After any necessary adjustments, the review strategy should be put forward again to district and regional management for formal approval.

The approved options will be reviewed by PCI to ensure consistency with national parameters.

Product requirements: Through a comprehensive review and approval strategy ensure site, district, region and national consistency in the face of detailed client scrutiny.

Consultation with clients

Consultation with clients should include affected business, the public, other government agencies and other sectors of the

Department (consultation should be solicited on the clients' preferences as to how and what levels of safety services are delivered within the Region). It is also important to gauge the clients willingness to accept changes in how services are to be delivered and their preferences on how service costs should be recovered from the user groups.

During the "Fast Track" it is also important to remember that consultation with business operations must be completed as soon as possible. This is to allow affected businesses adequate time to adjust their client fees and information.

Product requirements: An accurate reflection of your clients' preferences on the available options.

Final direction resolution

Having explored the approved options and reviewed their acceptability with clients, the final decision as to product delivery should now be considered. This will define the service offered for the Region.

- Identify preferred means for services to be delivered by alternate measures, without compromising the quality of the service delivery.
- In the event a service is no longer required, this documentation should be kept outlining the rationale, this information is essential in the event of litigation.

Product requirements: A final list of services to be offered regionally that will have to be refined for site delivery.

Identify costs & funding options for chosen direction

With the service offer defined it will be necessary to revisit the detailed costing for the existing services, using them as a basis for the determination of the new offer. (Spread Sheet Appendix 5). If a service is reduced or no longer required then it should be removed from the spread sheet. Similarly, amendments should be made for those services that will continue to be provided but delivered by another means. With the costs determined, it will be necessary to identify alternate funding opportunities as outlined in the VRM Revenue and Cost Recovery Continuum (Appendix 3).

Product requirements: An amended spread sheet with detailed funding options.

Funding mechanism decisions

The detailed cost associated with service offer delivery and the funding options should be forwarded to regional/district management for approval. The recommended options should be identified by the development team to help speed the approval process.

Product requirements: An approved cost and funding strategy for the site/district/ region public safety program.

Prepare communications package

Based on the approved service offer and funding strategy, a communications package should be prepared in co-operation with your regional communication specialists. Separate packages should be prepared for the public, businesses and partners. The paper, Persuasive Communication Strategies: Helping Visitors Assess Public Safety Program Pricing Initiatives (Appendix 7), contains important communication guidelines and tips to help you. These guidelines have been prepared by Dr. Ron McCarville, Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies from the University of Waterloo.

Product requirements: A professionally defined comprehensive communication package prepared for delivery by Departmental communication specialists.

Appendix 1: PMC Record of Decision

(Approved Resolutions Search and Rescue, April 1995)

- That the Search and Rescue Revenue/Cost Recovery Framework be adopted. This appears in Appendix 3 and is now referred to as the Revenue and Cost Recovery Options Continuum.
- That each REXD be responsible for implementing a communication strategy to inform businesses of the cost recovery measures being introduced in 1996-97.
- That the Search and Rescue Revenue/Cost Recovery Framework consultation be concluded by October 1, 1995 (The ADM extended the deadline to October 31, 1995 for Alberta and Pacific/Yukon. Other regions are to complete this as soon as possible) and the Framework be implemented by April 1996.
- That the Search and Rescue Working Group develop a guideline demonstrating the application of the Revenue/Cost Recovery Framework similar to the document approved for Heritage Presentation.

Appendix 2: ICSAR Cost Recovery Principles

- The federal government will respond to all search and rescue incidents within their jurisdiction and cost recovery may be applied.
- Some search and rescue services provide benefits to specific user groups. Recovery of costs by federal departments through user fees and/or licences for search and rescue service is fair and reasonable.
- Fraudulent, frivolous or vexatious activation of the search and rescue system, notwithstanding any criminal charges which may be entered, will result in the recovery of all or part of the costs of the service as a means of deterrent.
- Cost recovery actions will not delay or discourage the legitimate activities of the search and rescue system nor inhibit the carriage or use of approved safety equipment.
- Every individual has a duty to abide by the general rules of caution and safety, as well as by the rules of conduct attached to activities, which lie upon him/her according to the circumstances, usage, practice or law. Any failure in this duty may make him/her liable for all or part of the cost of search and rescue response.
- Individuals who intentionally participate in inherently dangerous and/or unregulated activities for which no safety standards exist may be liable for all or part of the cost of search and rescue response.
- Responsibility for costs incurred may apply to specific user groups, individuals, owners, operators or other parties.

Appendix 3: Revenue and Cost Recovery Options Continuum

The following chart was developed in order to determine which parts of the public safety program warrant the application of cost recovery principles and which do not. In order to understand how to use the "continuum," a number of definitions are required:

Service categories and associated elements
"Service categories" are the breakdown of any Departmental public safety/program into its component parts. There are seven "service categories" which cover all aspects of the program and these seven categories are subsequently broken down into various elements which may or may not be found at a sites depending on the individual nature of its PS program. The categories with their potential elements are laid out in detail in Appendix 4.

Funding options
The Public Safety Programs, now called the Visitor Risk Management (VRM) Programs, were designated in the Department's revenue strategy as requiring "full cost recovery." On closer scrutiny, it became apparent that some of the "service categories" and their accompanying "elements" were clearly undertaken for the general public good and as such would not be subject to "full cost recovery." The chart demonstrates which funding options apply to which "service category." Funding options range from:

Tax based
This is from existing or projected (new parks) A base sources.

Personal user fees (PUF)
General fees collected from Park visitors to support basic level programs.

Surcharge to personal user fee
Revenue collected in addition to the basic PUF to fund a particular service or group of services that benefit all visitors equally.

Direct fee for service
An hourly, daily or flat rate to cover costs of providing a particular service (e.g. safety talk to bus tour), or by providing a particular opportunity (e.g. filming)

"In kind payments"
The transfer of goods and service, but not money, between co-operating organization or agencies.

Resident fees
As statistics indicate a heavy use of SAR services by resident populations, a set resident fee including a surcharge for SAR services could be initiated.

Donations
Contributions or gifts from any source.

Sponsorships
Payments for the right to promote or advertise.

Self insurance
Some foreign visitors have access to, and carry, policies which will pay for all, or some emergency response costs incurred on the

policy holders behalf. In these cases, legitimate cost should be billed to the insurance company.

Voluntary payments
Unsolicited and unstructured cash payments (partial or full) of cost incurred for services rendered to a group or individual.

Backcountry fees
A surcharge to backcountry activity fees.

Pre-set nominal fees
A non-punitive charged assessed against all recipients of a particular type of SAR service, which is below actual costs.

Commercial contract
Contractual obligations to provide a service with negotiated conditions, for a price.

Tax-based funding
Funds provided from federal taxes, and distributed through a central agency.

User fee
An up-front charge for use of a specific facility or geographic area.

Entrepreneurial options
All other means to generate funds reduce costs and manage assets for economic advantage.

Annual retainer and direct charges for service
A contractual arrangement where there is an annual charge to cover costs of readiness and training, plus a full, direct charge for all emergency response costs involved.

Self-generated funds
All funds raised by fees, charges, donations or entrepreneurial means, other than tax-based funds.

Court-ordered restitutions
Where direct costs for SAR response are covered through legal recourse. Normally there would be some element of illegal, fraudulent or vexatious activation of the SAR system before this form of cost recovery would be invoked.

Department of Canadian Heritage

Visitor Risk Management Program

Revenue and Cost Recovery Options Continuum

Service Categories	Planning and Risk Mgmt	Occupational Health and Safety Training	Program Support Functions	Basic Public Safety Service Package	Specialized Accident Prevention Programs	Search and Rescue Readiness	Search and Rescue Response
Service Category Elements	- V R M Process - Legal, policy, contractual Obl - Park, Service & Business plans - Disaster Plans - internal - Disaster Plans - external	- First Aid Trng - All levels - Interm.+ Wilderness Travel skills - All environments - Toxic Material Mgnt , Initial response and containment	- Strategic alliances, support to volunteers - Clerical & Log. support service - Peer group contacts - Data Collection and Mgnt - Safety Equip. Purchase & Mtn - Advisory Comm. Ops - Special proj. & assignments - R&D - Internal - R&D - External - Staff Medicals - Monitoring Concessionaires	- Basic natural hazard awareness information - videos, contacts, pamplets etc - Level I - responses - Barriers, fencing, signing etc	- Requested safety talks - BC Avalanche forcasts - Personal Contacts with subject matter experts - Environmental advisories - Safety registration services - Non justifiable search requests - In-house consulting services - Partnership obligations - Awareness programs - Highway avalanche control - Natural Hazard mitigation	- SAR equip. acquition & Mtnce - SAR training for responders - Operational planning for SAR - Readiness exercises - Search Dog programs - Surf guard services - HSRS program (pilot testing) - Capital Replacement program - Contracts to business for SAR	- Search for lost persons - all park environments - HSRS applications - Mountain rescue operations - Water Rescue operations - Avalanche rescue - Urban SAR operations - Search Dog Operations - Dive Rescue - Medivac Operations - SAR assistance to other agencies - SAR response for clients of Park Businesses - Services purchased by other SAR organizations
Beneficiaries **(Those clients and customers that may influence the Revenue strategy chosen by the Protected Heritage Area.)**	- Dept. of Canadian Heritage - Central Agencies - Provincial, Municipal and Ist. Nations Governments.	- Dept. of Canadian Heritage Staff - Dept. of Canadian Heritage - Co-deliverers of services	- Dept. of Canadian Heritage - Researchers - concessionaires - Co-deliverers of services	- All visitors - Residents - Central Agencies - Other DCH cost centers Staff - Resident businesses - Residents	- Specific visitors - Other DCH cost centers - NGO's , Co-deliverers - Dept. of Canadian Heritage - Residents	- All visitors - Cooperating Agencies - Some DCH cost centers - Resident businesses	- Specific visitors - Federal Agencies - Provincial and Municipal agencies - Resident businesses - Residents - Non resident businesses users
Funding Options	**Primary:** - Tax based funding. (Funding other than user fees) **If required or available:** - Self generated funds	**Primary:** - Tax based funding. (Funding other than user fees) **If required or available:** - Self generated funds - "In kind" payments	**Primary:** - Tax based funding (Funding other than user fees) **If required or available:** - Direct Fee for service - Personal user fees (PUF)	**Primary:** - Personal user fees (PUF) - Tax based funding. (Funding other than user fees) **If required or available:** - Resident fees - Sponsorships - "In kind" payments - surcharge to the Personal User Fees (PUF)	**Primary:** - Direct Fee for service - Sponsorships - Entrepreneurial options - surcharge to the Personal User Fees (PUF) **If required or available:** - Resident fees - "In kind" payments - Donations - Tax based funding (Funding other than user fees)	**Primary:** - surcharge to the Personal User Fees (PUF) - "In kind" payments - Annual retainer and direct charge for service - User fees - Resident fees **If required or available:** - Sponsorships - Donations - Entrepreneurial options - Tax based funding (Funding other than user fees	Cost recovery will depend on each incident, but should start with user funded options and should use "tax based " funding as a last resort. **Primary:** - Self insurance - surcharge to the Personal User Fee (PUF) - Voluntary payments - Back country fees - Pre-set nominal fees **If Required or available:** - Direct fees for service - Charge to Provincial Health care if applicable - Charge to Provincial Coroner if applicable - "In kind" payments - Resident's SAR charges - Court ordered restitution - Commercial contracts - Entrepreneurial options - Tax based funding. (for low visitation sites) ??

TAX BASED FUNDING

Appendix 4: Program Elements within Each Service Category

Planning and Risk Management

- Visitor Risk Management process
- Legal, policy, contractual obligations
- Park management plans, service plans, business plans
- Disaster planning - internal
- Disaster planning - external

Occupational Health and Safety Training

- First aid training at all levels
- Up to intermediate wilderness travel and survival
- Skills, all park environments
- Toxic material management, initial response and containment.

Program Support Functions

- Strategic alliances, support to volunteers
- Clerical and logistical support services.
- Peer group contacts
- Data collection and management
- General safety equipment purchase and maintenance
- Advisory committee operations
- Special projects and assignments
- Research and development - internally generated
- Research and development - requested by others
- Program audit functions
- Monitoring concessionaire safety
- Accounting, cost of collecting fees
- Staff medicals, procedures

Basic Public Safety Services

- Basic natural hazard awareness information including packaged information, videos, pamphlets, general personal contacts, etc.
- Level I responses - basic level frontcountry emergency responses.
- Barriers, fencing, signing, other safety structures, built park lands

Specialized Accident Prevention Programs

- Safety talks as requested by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), businesses or agencies.
- Backcountry avalanche danger forecasts
- Personal contacts with subject matter experts
- Surf, tidal and weather advisories
- Safety registration services
- Requests to search when park SAR staff feel response not justified.
- In-house consulting to other subactivities.
- Partnership obligations to wilderness safety groups, organizations.
- Awareness programs for park businesses (new staff training, etc.)
- Highway avalanche control for secondary park roads and facilities.
- Natural hazard mitigation (barrier rock scaling, etc.)

Search and Rescue - Readiness

- SAR equipment acquisition and maintenance
- SAR training for responders as per geographical needs and capability
- Operational planning for National Park SAR
- Readiness exercises
- Search dog programs (50% VRM, the other 50% law enforcement)
- Surf guard services

- Heli Sling Rescue Service program (pilot testing, research and development, etc.)
- Capital replacement program - boats, skidoos, (fair percentage)
- Contracts to business for SAR response.

Search and Rescue - Response

- Search for lost persons - all park environments.
- Heli Sling Rescue Service applications
- Mountain rescue operations
- Water rescue operations
- Avalanche rescue
- Urban SAR operations
- Search dog operations
- Medevac operations
- SAR assistance to other agencies
- SAR response for clients of park businesses
- Services purchased by other SAR organizations

Appendix 5: Cost Calculation Spread Sheet

(Example only)

Programs	Categories Service							
	Planning and Risk Mgmt.	Occ. Health & Safety	Program Support Function	Basic P.S. Service Package	Spec. Accident Prev. Prog.	SAR Readiness	SAR Response	Totals
Land								
Ambulance& First Aid								
Ground SAR								
Wildland SAR								
Cliff SAR								
Mtn. SAR								
Search Dog Program								
Avalanche SAR								
Water								
Great Lakes & Coastal SAR								
River SAR								
Dive Programs								
Life Guard								
Surf SAR								
Totals								

Appendix 6: Examples of VRM Field Level of Service

Basic Safety Services may include:

- Operate public roadways, facilities and frontcountry trails
- Construct and maintain barriers, signing and safety services
- Basic natural hazards awareness information
- Basic level frontcountry emergency responses

Response Services may include:

- Standard land search
- Cliff rescue
- Medical flights
- Avalanche rescue
- Swiftwater rescue
- Ice rescue
- Ambulance services
- Problem wildlife responses
- Emergency vehicle services (boats, ATVs, etc,)
- Wildland rescue
- Mountain search and rescue
- Helicopter sling rescue
- Search dog services
- Marine search and rescue
- Surf rescue
- Dive rescue
- Non-emergency responses (requested by client)
- Others

Prevention Services may include:

- Safety information services for public
- Safety information services for businesses, NGOs or private agencies
- Condition advisories (specify each) i.e. surf, avalanche, weather
- Safety registration services
- Monitor concession agreements
- Highway avalanche control on class 3 thru 6 highways
- Natural hazard abatement
- Others

Appendix 7: Persuasive Communication Strategies: Helping Visitors Assess Public Safety Program Pricing Initiatives

Prepared by Ron McCarville, Ph.D., Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo, for the Public Safety Program, Parks Canada (August 1995)

Preamble

Parks Canada staff have been placed on the horns of a dilemma. Increasingly, a variety of fees and charges are being required to support many of their program initiatives including some aspects of the public safety program. Unfortunately, users who most enjoy and benefit from those initiatives may reject the notion of fees for public services. They may feel that they have already provided adequate funding for national parks through their tax dollars. A national survey in the U.S. suggests that requests for additional fees can cause outcry among some users. It is even more worrisome that the idea of fees may discourage park visitors from seeking necessary assistance. Therein lies the dilemma. Fees designed to improve or maintain Parks Canada programs such as Public Safety may alienate and even jeopardize the very people for whom the programs are being improved or maintained.

Much of the solution to this dilemma lies in communication. An extensive pricing literature tells us that any price can be considered acceptable just as it can be considered as unacceptable. Communication, and more precisely context, helps the user evaluate that price. If the context suggests that a fee for public safety services is fair, then the user is more likely to consider the price as acceptable. If the context suggests that a fee is unfair, then it is likely that dissatisfaction will result. Consequently Parks Canada must help its visitors evaluate its fees in some meaningful context. Research suggests that if official communications provide only fee information, negative reactions may result. The thesis of this report is that all fee initiatives should be accompanied by efforts to communicate an appropriate context to users.

Public safety program communication strategies should not be confined to users however. Related messages must also be directed to Parks Canada staff members. As outlined in this report, staff members must be fully briefed on all public safety program fee related issues. Users, who are unconvinced by more formal communication strategies, will look to staff for information and guidance. Uncertainty, ambivalence, or confusion expressed by staff members will be passed on through word of mouth and rejection of fees may result. Consequently, staff response to fees should be considered as a critical component of any communication strategy.

This report offers a series of guidelines that can be used to develop communication efforts around any fee initiative (but was developed specifically for the public safety program). Each is followed by specific recommendations arising directly from that general guideline.

Communication Guidelines

Message Content

Guideline #1: Park users want to know that the price they are being asked to pay is "fair."

They will judge the apparent fairness of park fees according to three criteria. First, they want to know that Parks Canada is relying on fees only as a last resort. They expect that allocations received from tax dollars will be exhausted before they are asked to pay user fees. Second, visitors will expect to pay fees which are generally consistent with the price they paid during their last visit. (This is primarily the case for heavy users.) Third, they will judge whether or not price increases are accompanied by improvements in service offerings commensurate with those increases.

Suggestions:
1. (a) Accompany new fee initiatives with frank discussions of financial conditions faced by Parks Canada (and where appropriate, the safety services program in particular).

1. (b) Do not introduce fees that "jump" dramatically from previous fee levels. Though heavy users will likely notice (and perhaps resist ANY increase), this issue may be particularly important where bonds or other potentially costly measures are being introduced for the first time.

1. (c) Always accompany fee information with the benefits associated with the payment of those fees. Discussion of program improvements is especially timely if fees are increased. (Though this issue will be discussed in more detail below, it is worthwhile to stress here that any discussion of benefits must focus on those benefits valued by the visitor.)

Guideline #2: Park users hope to maximize benefit in return for their payment.

Suggestions:
2. (a) Generally, the more benefit visitors enjoy while onsite, the more reasonable seems any related fee. Park staff can play a critical role in helping visitors enjoy their visits. This issue is particularly important when communicating with those most dissatisfied with fee initiatives. Staff can suggest (through brochures, personal communications, interpretative programs, etc.) preferred sites, upcoming events, or even alternative activities during traffic delays. All such measures maximize the sense of value visitors enjoy during their stay.

2. (b) These benefits may also accrue to facilities, key services or other users. Research suggests that visitors are likely to support fees that:

(i) are returned to the park in which they were collected
(ii) improve or maintain existing high quality services;
(iii) assist user groups deserving of support (visitors will tend to support fees allocated to others who are most "like" the visitors as well as children and senior citizens)

2. (c) Focus on the ways in which fee revenues are being used to enhance the user's visit. Ideally messages should communicate the positive services they receive as a result of paying a fee. For example, search and rescue readiness/response capabilities might be outlined as they relate to that user. Reference to the quality of the service being provided internationally recognized prevention services) will further enhance the sense of value enjoyed by visitors.

2. (d) Conversely, related messages might focus on the problems that will be avoided as a result of paying fees. They might indicate that paying an upfront fee (as a type of insurance) will avoid the possibility of medical emergency, lost children, and so on. This more negative strategy is far less likely to be successful than the more positive approaches offered above. The effectiveness of this "insurance" approach will be

enhanced when accompanied by messages focusing on the likelihood of problems being experienced while onsite. In effect, such messages should increase the perceived probabilityof requiring safety services. This approach might best be taken only in the case of higher risk activity participants.

Guideline #3: Park visitors hope to minimize other costs when making a financial payment.
Delays, inconvenience, and confusion all represent additional costs to the visitor. If we plan to charge fees, then the payment process should be as simple and convenient as possible. In this way, related emotional costs are reduced.

Suggestions:
3. (a) Emphasize choice of options as well as the ease and convenience of fee payments. For example, if a bond is required staff may be able to assist visitors by offering suggestions on the amounts and terms of "ideal" bond arrangements.

3. (b) Ensure that fees can be paid at a variety of locations, that the fee structures are easy to understand, and that visitors have can choose the fee option which is best for them.

Guideline #4: Communications must deal with the concerns of two distinct user groups (light and heavy users).

Suggestions:
4. (a) Light users may be confused by technical terms used in many official publications and will likely seek benefits as straightforward as "fees will be returned to the park" or "fee revenues will be used to provide safety services."

4. (b) Heavy park users (tour operators, residents living in nearby communities, special interest groups, etc.) will be unconvinced by such simplistic messages. Efforts to provide an appropriate context to heavy users should focus on communications relating to specific value or choice options (discussed in guidelines #2 and #3).

Guideline #5: Those unhappiest with fee initiatives are most likely to seek out staff members for (i) guidance and (ii) the opportunity to express their dissatisfaction.
As a result, staff members act as a second line of communication with park visitors.

Suggestions:
5. (a) Staff members should have scripted responses consistent with the principles set forth here. They can then discuss issues of convenience, need, or user benefit as appropriate. They could even offer advice regarding how to further enhance their visit to the park. The goal is to alter the payment context in a way that encourages acceptance of a fee. For example, if a visitor comments on the level of fees, staff might help the visitor appreciate the great value that the fee represents. Staff might suggest that "that works out to X pennies per hour for access to one of the greatest parks on earth." As noted earlier, staff members might also help the irate visitor enjoy even greater value by indicating that "annual passes are available at considerable discounts if you plan to return to us again this year." Staff can and should establish a context in which current fees seem fair and appropriate.

5. (b) Visitors may simply wish to complain. If this is the case, staff members should listen to the visitor's concerns and assist where possible. The goal is to ensure that complainants feel that their concerns will be given serious consideration by park staff. Staff should then log all comments/ complaints for subsequent staff discussion and action.

Miscellaneous Issues

Message Format

Industry literature suggests that average visitors will allocate about TWO seconds to any brochure you provide them. They will quickly scan the material for items of interest. Such items might be pictures or bold headings. If these points of interest draw their attention they will look for secondary items of interest. (This explains why successful publications like *National Geographic* rely on pictures to draw the attention of the reader. *National Geographic* staff then place concise captions beside the pictures as secondary points of interest.) Parks Canada staff should acknowledge visitors reading/search patterns when developing brochures and other written communications. Brochures full of dry text will likely receive little attention and their impact will be compromised as a result.

Message Timing

Heavy users will typically require more time to adjust to changes in fees. Generally the larger the proposed increase, the greater the required lead time. The bus tour companies, for example, may need at least a year to adjust their fee schedules to accommodate major revisions to fee structures. Local users may desire extensive public consultations before changes are confirmed. Conversely, light users may simply wish to be informed at any point before arriving at the gate.

In all cases, a "pulsing schedule" of communication is probably best. A pulsing technique sends out communications at prearranged intervals. These intervals are based on the requirements of different client groups and demand at the park sites. Again, if price changes are large, then tour companies will need all relevant information 12 to 14 months before the changes occurs at the gate. Conversely, light users might be notified through communication campaigns just prior to popular holiday weekends. All pulsing efforts can be supported through ongoing communications at the park sites.

Concluding Comments

In conclusion, there are four over-riding principles which should guide the design of communications over fees. First, the public is not generally interested in problems faced by service providers. Discussion of problems for the provider is neither convincing nor does it lead to positive action on the part of users. Rather, visitors want to know how your efforts (combined with the fee you have just collected) will improve their visit, their park, their vacation. The best communications are those placed in terms the visitor understands and values.

In related terms, efforts to gather support for pricing initiatives should focus on solutions that clients already support. This client-centred orientation is the foundation of many successful communication strategies. The reason for this success is perhaps obvious. The individual already values the solution being offered. You need only provide an appropriate context to ensure that the client understands the connection between your fee initiatives and that valued solution.

The alternative approach is to decide on a solution that YOU value and attempt to convince everyone else to support that which you are proposing. Many public sector communication strategies rely on this approach. The public sector typically "notifies" the public of a position it has taken and compliance is assumed. It is perhaps not surprising that such initiatives receive little support from many of those effected.

This is not to say that such an approach cannot succeed. If it is to succeed, however, it must be undertaken over extended periods and considerable resources must be allocated

to ensure its success. Efforts to convince us that cleaning detergents should smell "lemon-fresh" if they are to be effective or that ice beer is somehow superior to its non-ice competitors are examples of this approach.

Third, the public is interested in solutions. Messages which focus on problems alone simply overwhelm the listener and encourage inactivity. That is why the advertising we notice most and the public service appeals we support identify problems but also include solutions to those same problems. They tell us what we must do in order to "solve" a pressing concern. Public safety communication strategies might begin by making a problem or issue clear to the visitor ("Last year 1 in X visitors required safety services." The term "visitors" might be substituted by 'boaters', 'families', or any group at which park staff plan to target their communications). Communications might then tell visitors of efforts to solve the problem on their behalf then note the small portion of their fees used to support these important services. In this way both the prolem and their role in providing the solution are made clear.

Fortunately, Parks Canada (including its public safety program) now enjoys considerable support from its millions of visitors. They need not be convinced of the value of this program. Rather, they operate under many misconceptions about the operation of Parks. This suggests the fourth over-riding principle around which communications should be designed. Communications should educate the user. Users may assume that the taxes they have already paid have provided adequately for park needs. They may assume that, though others may require assistance, they personally will never call on emergency services for aid. They may assume therefore that they are being treated unfairly when asked to pay additional fees to support safety programs. The goal of Parks Canada public safety communication strategies relating to fees should focus on this perception of unfair treatment. Using the guidelines offered here, any number of strategies can be developed to accomplish this task. Visitors can be told of dramatic cuts to Parks Canada budgets and the need for their help if parks are to continue to provide safety services to their families. They can be told that members of groups just like their own (boaters, young families, hikers, ... each park should identify those groups who most require Search and Rescue or medical services) often require the services of the safety program. Given the appropriate context, any reasonable fee initiative for public safety programs will be supported by those who enjoy Parks Canada programs.